

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 16-27 are canceled and the Abstract is amended. Reconsideration of the present application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 5-9 are allowed and claims 2-4 and 14 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim.

The Office Action requests affirmation of the election with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-15. Applicants filed a Confirmation of Telephone Election in the Patent Office on October 5, 2004, confirming the Election of Group I, claims 1-15. In response to the Patent Office's request, the Election of Group I, claims 1-15 is hereby reaffirmed. Moreover, as discussed above, claims 16-27 are canceled.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 10 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,519,441 to Sawada in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,094,560 to Thomas and U.S. Patent No. 5,920,759 to Ushiroji; and claims 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sawada in view of Thomas and Ushiroji, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,372,984 to Yamauchi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the applied art disclose an image forming apparatus comprising, a cooling portion for cooling the recording sheet to which the toner image has been fixed; and a curl correcting portion for correcting a curl of the recording sheet when the recording sheet is cooled, as claimed in claim 1.

The Office Action admits that Sawada does not teach a cooling portion for cooling the recording sheet to which the toner image has been fixed; however, the Office Action asserts that Thomas teaches a cooling portion 220 for cooling the recording sheet to which the toner image has been fixed, and that it would have been obvious to modify Sawada to have a

cooling portion as taught by Thomas for cooling the recording sheet in order to provide an efficient means for cooling the recording sheet after fixation to prevent moisture from affecting the image. Applicants understand that implicit in this assertion is a second assertion that it would have been obvious to include, after the fixing portion, the moisturizing device 210 disclosed by Thomas, because otherwise there would be no need to prevent moisture from affecting the image (it is noted that any moisture present prior to the fixing portion would be evaporated in the fixing portion).

Moreover, the Office Action admits that Sawada fails to disclose a curl correcting portion for correcting a curl of the recording sheet when the recording sheet is cooled; however, the Office Action asserts that Ushiroji teaches a curl correcting portion for correcting a curl of the recording sheet when the recording sheet has the image fixated, and that it would have been obvious to modify Sawada to have a curl correcting portion as taught by Ushiroji in order to provide an efficient means for decurling the ends of the sheet after the image has been fixated due to the affects of moisture in the recording sheet.

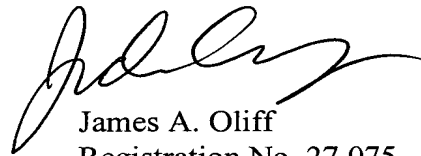
However, Applicants respectfully note that, according to Thomas, curl is removed by the moisturizing device 210 and assembly 220 that includes the cooling device 226. Therefore, if modified according to Thomas, Sawada would have no need for a separate decurling device such as that disclosed by Ushiroji. Conversely, if first modified according to Ushiroji, Sawada would have no need for a separate curl correction system such as that provided by the moisturizing device 210 and cooling device 226 of Thomas.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted the applied art fails to anticipate or render obvious the features of claim 1. Furthermore, claims 10-13 and 15, which depend from claim 1, are likewise distinguishable over the applied art for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jude L. Cooney
Registration No. 54,045

JAO:JLC/ksz

Attachment:
Amended Abstract

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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